



Testimony of The Connecticut Audubon Society in support of S.B. 998 “An Act Concerning Minor Revisions To Environment Related Statutes”, H.B. 7295 “An Act Concerning A Recycling Program For Paper And Packaging And Requiring Certain Municipal Solid Waste Management Goals” and in support of efforts to reduce plastics in the environment March 11th, 2019.

The Connecticut Audubon Society thanks the Committee and the sponsors of **S.B. 998** for proposing this legislation, sections of which, related to the Connecticut Forest Practices Act we strongly support and for the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue. I currently sit on the Connecticut Forest Practices Advisory Board, representing a non-profit conservation organization not primarily focused on forestry (the Connecticut Audubon Society), a position appointed by former Governor Malloy. The Connecticut Audubon Society strongly supports the following section of the proposed bill, which represents common sense and minor revisions to the statutes, found in lines 455-464:

“Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (A) of this 455subdivision, the commissioner may grant a sixty-day extension for any 456forest practitioner who failed to submit a complete application for 457renewal prior to the expiration date of such forest practitioner's 458certification. Such forest practitioner shall submit a complete 459 application for renewal within such sixty-day extension period. Any 460renewed certification issued by the commissioner pursuant to this 461subparagraph shall not require reexamination by such forest 462practitioner prior to such issuance but shall require the submission of 463an additional fee, as determined by the commissioner.”

These changes were proposed by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Forestry Division to remedy past problems where forest practitioners in good standing unknowingly let their registration expire and/or may have submitted an incomplete registration. The changes would give the commissioner discretion to grant an extension to the renewal process rather than to have to begin the process from the beginning. The forest products industry in Connecticut is important to forest health in the state, offering landowners alternatives to development of their lands and allowing landowners to perform habitat management in an economically feasible way. Such activities require an adequate workforce of qualified forest practitioners to oversee and perform the work necessary to achieve landowners' habitat and revenue goals in an ecologically sustainable manner. The proposed changes would allow the commissioner more flexibility in the renewal process and avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts that waste limited staff resources both within the agency and in the practitioner network.

Additionally, we also support the other minor changes to the Connecticut Forest Practices Act proposed in this legislation, as they represent a common sense approach to streamlining the renewal and certification process.

There are also multiple proposals that seek to reduce the amount of plastic waste in the environment and/or to improve the efficiency of plastic recycling programs. Plastics can have multiple deleterious effects on birds, other wildlife and their habitats.



Single use plastics present a variety of environmental problems ranging from the environmental impacts of the extraction process for the fossil fuels required for their manufacture, to their improper disposal and the hazards that plastics in the environment pose to birds and other wildlife at the end of their usefulness to the consumer and society.

Plastic waste remains in the environment for decades and may pose entanglement hazards to birds, marine mammals, turtles and other wildlife. Recent studies have shown that ingestion of plastic waste is a major threat to seabirds, marine mammals, sea turtles, fish and other creatures and the potential impacts of micro-plastics in the environment are not yet fully understood at this time. The Connecticut Audubon Society strongly supports efforts to reduce the amount of single-use plastic in the consumer and waste streams and to increase the efficiency of our recycling efforts. Specifically we strongly support, H.B. 7295 which promotes a more systematic approach to recovering materials and reducing waste generation. This could help make sure all the separate bills form a cohesive system for eliminating litter than impacts birds & damages ecosystems. Otherwise, we will leave the difficult decisions as to the best approaches to achieving these goals in your capable hands.

Thank you for the opportunity to lend our support to these important proposals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick M. Comins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Patrick M. Comins, executive director